

Final Notes September 7, 1999

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

August 5, 1999, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The August 5, 1999 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The agenda for the August 5 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via email at kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.

Brown and Silverberg welcomed everyone to the meeting, led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

II. Updates.

A. In-Season Management. TMT chair Cindy Henriksen updated the IT on the current status of the system, beginning with flow information. We're now into the summer management period, she said; because of the late runoff this year, flows in the system remain interestingly high. Most of the storage projects are still almost full; Libby is in the top foot of its operating range, Hungry Horse is full, Grand Coulee is in the top foot of its operating range. The only exception is Dworshak, said Henriksen, which is currently 30 feet from full and drafting at a rate of 19 Kcfs. The resultant flow is about 46 Kcfs at Lower Granite; at McNary, in excess of 230 Kcfs, much higher than normal for this time of year.

Given these facts, Henriksen continued, our strategy for the remainder of the season is to continue to use Dworshak to the best of our ability, while keeping in mind the temperature needs of Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. Current outflow temperature from Dworshak is 47 degrees F.; water temperature, as most of you are aware, is always a concern for the hatchery at this time of year. In response to a question from Jim Ruff, Henriksen said the current water temperature at the forebay fixed monitoring station at Lower Granite is in the 68-69-degree range; at the tailwater fixed monitoring station, temperatures are currently 66-67 degrees.

Henriksen said the current plan is to ramp Dworshak outflow down to about 15 Kcfs next week; the TMT is continuing to discuss how best to use the remaining water in Dworshak through the

remainder of the season. At McNary, the overall objective is to meet 200 Kcfs on a weekly average basis through the end of August. The preliminary estimate of the January-July runoff at The Dalles was 124 MAF, 117% of average – in other words, an above-average water supply, and very late in arriving, Henriksen said.

In response to another question from Ruff, Henriksen said that the preliminary estimates show Libby, Hungry Horse and Grand Coulee reservoirs drafting about 10 feet in 1999, in order to maintain the 200 Kcfs flow target at McNary through the end of the season.

Henriksen also described the recent transformer problem at Lower Monumental, which has now been resolved.

Next up was Michele DeHart of the Fish Passage Center, who updated the IT on the current status of the fish migration. She distributed Enclosure C, a memo, dated August 4, outlining the FPC's preliminary analysis of 1999 Smolt Monitoring Program and Comparative Survival Study data. She invited the IT to study this information at their leisure, and to let her know if it contains issues that require more detailed explanation.

Overall, said DeHart, passage indices at the dams were higher than they were in 1997 and 1998, but were lower than predicted, for all species. Steelhead passage through the Mid-Columbia was 60% higher than it was in 1998; sockeye passage was 40% higher. Chinook passage timing was later at Lower Granite, but earlier at Rock Island and John Day, than it was in 1998, DeHart said.

We also looked at the PIT-tagged fish from the Smolt Monitoring Program and the Comparative Survival Study, to see how many of those PIT-tags were recovered at Rice Island, DeHart said. Two things jumped out at us – first, that steelhead smolts appear to be more vulnerable to tern predation, probably because of timing and/or size. DeHart cautioned that this mortality rate estimate is heavily dependent on the estimated population size below Bonneville. Second, she said, there didn't appear to be any difference between transported and non-transported fish, in terms of PIT-tag recoveries at Rice Island. In response to a question, DeHart said tern predation at Rice Island doesn't appear to be having a huge mortality impact, at least for the Smolt Monitoring Program and Comparative Survival Study groups – it is certainly below the 30% tern-caused mortality figure that has been reported in the media. DeHart added that the Fish and Wildlife Service is doing a more comprehensive study of the tern predation study for all release groups and populations.

Again, said DeHart, if there are specific aspects of the Smolt Monitoring Program or Comparative Survival Study data the IT would like a more detailed presentation on, please let Brian know, and we will provide it at an upcoming IT meeting. In response to a question from Ruff, DeHart said the 1999 smolt survival estimates should be available by October or November.

B. Plan For Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). Recent PATH activities were addressed under Agenda Item V, below.

C. Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No ISAB report was presented at today's meeting.

D. Water Quality Team (WQT). Recent WQT activities were addressed under Agenda Items III and IV, below.

E. System Configuration Team (SCT). Ruff said the SCT is continuing to work on its FY'00 CRFM rankings; the initial state and federal rankings are complete, and the tribal rankings are expected to be ready in time for discussion at the August SCT meeting. Once the tribal rankings are received, he said, we can begin to work toward SCT consensus on the CRFM priorities for FY'00. We currently have a House CRFM appropriation of \$65 million and a Senate appropriation of \$70 million; in all likelihood, the FY'00 CRFM budget will fall somewhere in between the two, once the Conference Committee has done its work, said Ruff. \$65 million is approximately two-thirds of the amount the Corps requested for FY'00, he added, which means these rankings are even more important than they've been in recent years. The next SCT meeting is scheduled for August 26.

Ruff added that both the House and Senate Appropriations bills include language prohibiting further study of John Day drawdown, as well as prohibiting any study of McNary drawdown or breaching, without prior approval of the committees.

Moving on, Ruff touched on an issue that has come up at IT several times in the past – the detrimental effects of the cold-water releases from Dworshak Reservoir on steelhead production at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. The reason we're raising this again, he said, is that the technical forums have been unable to deal with the structural fixes needed to the hatchery water supply which would allow us to fully utilize the selective withdrawal system at Dworshak. If we could finally fix this problem, it would give the TMT a much greater range of options in terms of controlling temperatures in the Lower Snake River during the late summer period.

Ruff noted that this problem has been discussed on numerous occasions at SCT; the Corps' position is that this work cannot be funded under the Columbia River Fish Mitigation Program, but that it is instead an O&M item. CRFM funding is limited to the eight mainstem projects through which fish pass; Dworshak is not one of those projects. As most of you are aware, said Ruff, O&M funding is extremely limited; if the Corps were to fund this work, they would have to defer other badly-needed O&M activities. He added that the total cost of the fix at Dworshak Hatchery is about \$1.4 million.

Marv Yoshinaka said the Fish and Wildlife Service would very much like to see this project funded; in addition to the limitations the current situation imposes on the project operators' ability to control temperatures in the Lower Snake, it also affects the Fish and Wildlife Service's ability to meet mitigation goals for Dworshak. Yoshinaka distributed Enclosure D, a memo outlining the current problem and the proposed solution.

Basically, we're bringing this issue up again because it happens every year, but it's a problem the other forums have been unable to solve, said Ruff. We're hoping that the IT might be able to suggest some avenues for creative problem-solving, he said. Witt Anderson noted that there has been a great deal of discussion on this issue over the years; it gets to the heart of the scope issue for the Regional Forum process.

Anderson said the Corps' O&M program for fish passage is coordinated through the Fish Passage O&M subcommittee; FPOM has been discussing the work at Dworshak in the context of other O&M projects, such as hatchery funding for the Willamette hatcheries, and the operation and maintenance of fish passage facilities on the mainstem. However, FPOM really isn't a group that has the broader perspective needed to set these kinds of priorities -- its focus is on fish

passage, said Anderson. Frankly, the Corps thinks we need a forum in which to discuss these kinds of issues, he said. Ruff noted that the Artificial Production Review is looking at the Dworshak Hatchery situation; their report should be completed by some time this fall.

So the total fish and wildlife O&M budget is about \$28 million, \$21 million of which is reimbursed by Bonneville? Brown asked. Correct, Anderson replied – the reimbursable amount specified in the MOA is \$20.8 million. Because we underspent that \$20.8 million for the first three years or so, the reimbursable total will be \$23 million-\$24 million in FY'00. And the Corps is advocating that some sort of collaborative group, composed of tribal, state and federal entities, be formed to oversee the prioritization process? Brown asked. Yes, Anderson replied – FPOM can do part of that work, but again, its focus is on fish passage.

After a few minutes of further discussion, Brown suggested that it would be appropriate to revisit the formation of this collaborative group, which would essentially be an O&M counterpart to the SCT, under Agenda item VIII, Regional Forum Scope. There is also the question of where to find the \$1.4 million that is needed for this work; one possibility would be to set priorities within the \$28 million O&M budget. Another possibility would be to submit this project for Bonneville funding, Brown said – I don't know whether or not that's been tried unsuccessfully in the past, but it would seem to be another potential avenue for funding.

Michael Newsom of Reclamation suggested that it may be useful to send a representative to an upcoming Artificial Production Review meeting, to bring that group up to speed and ensure that they are fully aware of the operational issue at Dworshak Hatchery. Ruff said he has already alerted Mark Fritsch, the project manager for the Artificial Production Review, that this is a major, ongoing operational issue which needs to be addressed in the APR process; his response was that we need to let that process play out to see what role is envisioned for Dworshak National Fish Hatchery in the future, Ruff said. Keith Kutchins observed that this issue also needs to be run through the U.S. v. Oregon Production Advisory Committee. He suggested that Brown send a letter to the parties to the MOA, requesting that the MOA work group take up this issue. Newsom suggested that it would also be appropriate to send a similar letter to the APR participants, expressing the IT's belief that this is an issue that needs to be explicitly addressed in the APR process.

Ultimately, Silverberg suggested that Ruff, Newsom, Yoshinaka and Anderson discuss this issue over lunch, and develop a suggested approach for discussion under Agenda Item VIII later today. They agreed to do so.

Brown raised the concern that the question raised by Ruff and Yoshinaka, related to a specific measure at Dworshak Hatchery, had been lost in the discussion of the lack of a clear oversight group for fish and wildlife O&M funding. We're trying to solve that second problem, he said, and we didn't really do anything to solve the first one. We've been talking about the cold water problem at Dworshak Hatchery for years, he said – are we going to continue to do nothing about that problem until we solve this related institutional problem? I don't think the situation is quite that dire, Anderson said – we have funded some work to begin solving the problem at the hatchery, and we have allocated funds to update the rehab report in FY'00, to get a better handle on exactly what is needed and what it will cost to solve the problem. If BPA or NMFS wants to fund that work, he said, then it can probably move ahead relatively quickly. If Corps O&M funds are to be used, however, we still need to solve the problem that we have a limited amount

of resources to do a huge amount of work. We have to be able to establish priorities within the fish and wildlife O&M budget, Anderson said, because this isn't the only issue that lacks resources. Jim Nielsen said he has requested that this issue be included on the agenda for next Thursday's FPOM meeting.

F. Quantitative Analytical Report (QAR). No QAR update was presented at today's meeting.

III. Water Quality Team Guidelines.

WQT co-chair Mark Schneider distributed Enclosure E, the most recent draft of the Water Quality Team Guidelines, dated August 4. The guidelines have been reviewed by the WQT members, he explained; this current draft reflects the comments received in legislative format. I wanted to present this to you in this form, he said, because there are a couple of highlighted areas where some guidance is needed from the IT. Those suggested deletions, proposed by the Corps of Engineers, are found on pages 2 and 3 of this document, he said.

IV. Water Quality Team Report on Snake River Water Temperature Monitoring Framework.

Schneider distributed Enclosure F, a background paper on the Snake River water temperature monitoring issue. He reminded the group that this issue was discussed by the IT two meetings ago; the IT recognized that there was value in gathering water temperature data for the purpose of in-season management, as well as for post-season evaluation and to inform ongoing biological research, and tasked the WQT to frame a program for the development of a Lower Snake River water temperature monitoring program. This handout is a summary of those discussions within the Water Quality Team, Schneider explained; it includes a framework through which a funding agency, such as the Corps, could develop an RFP.

Schneider spent a few minutes going through the contents of Enclosure F, touching on the WQT's proposed objectives for this program and a suggested phased approach to addressing the Lower Snake water temperature monitoring program (please see Enclosure F for details).

The IT devoted a few minutes to a discussion of this paper. In response to a question, Anderson said the Lower Snake water temperature monitoring program could be funded under both the O&M program and the CRFM program; at least some of the elements of this program could qualify for CRFM funding because of their ties to Ted Bjornn's work with thermal tags. The long-term monitoring component, however, would need to be O&M-funded, Anderson said. That means it would have to be prioritized for O&M funding, just like the Dworshak Hatchery work we were discussing earlier? asked John Palensky of NMFS. That's correct, Anderson replied.

Is there any expectation that this project would be started this year? asked WQT co-chair Mary Lou Soscia of EPA. I believe Witt Anderson has said that some sort of additional temperature monitoring will be tied to the thermal tag prototype study being conducted this summer, Ruff replied. It's not the full scope you see here, but there is some additional monitoring work going on this summer, Anderson said.

Various IT and WQT participants requested an opportunity to review Enclosure F before making a recommendation on this issue. Did you have additional expectations, in terms of an IT

response to this today? Silverberg asked. Simply that it was the WQT's intention to hand this issue back to the IT at this point, Schneider replied. Once the funding agency issues its Request for Proposals, and those proposals are received, that would be the time when the WQT would re-engage on this issue, Schneider said. However, my understanding is that the framework outlined in this document is the WQT's response to the current assignment from the IT.

After a few minutes of further discussion, Ruff suggested that the WQT be asked to review Enclosure F; further, he said, it would be useful to bring in Mal Karr and Bolyvong Tanovan to brief the Water Quality Team on the existing water temperature data and what it tells us. The full WQT can then take that information, and make any revisions to this document that they feel are appropriate, Ruff said. I would second that motion, said BPA's Dan Daley. Yoshinaka suggested that the full Fish Passage Advisory Committee also be given an opportunity to review the WQT's proposed framework.

So at this point, this document goes back to the Water Quality Team and to other interested parties for further review and discussion, said Silverberg; there also needs to be a briefing to the WQT by Karr and Tanovan on the water temperature information that has been gathered and analyzed to date.

Ruff added that it may make more sense for the Water Quality Team, once it has reviewed this document as a group, to come to agreement about whether the first bullet under "Phase I" – "Collect and review the water temperature data gathered in 1991, 1992 and 1994-1997" – could be done within a few months by an outside contractor, or whether there was some other approach that would serve everyone's needs in an expedited manner. In other words, said Ruff, the WQT may have a better solution. DeHart added that it would be very helpful if the WQT framework were to include a clear definition of the objectives and actions to which the newly-collected data would be applied.

Is the IT comfortable, then, with sending this document back to the WQT to make the revisions offered at today's meeting, to conduct further review of its contents, and to consider the ultimate application of the data to be gathered under the Lower Snake water temperature monitoring program? Silverberg asked. There is also the question of putting the review of the existing data on the fast track, said Brown – the WQT needs to develop a plan laying out how that would be accomplished.

So I'm hearing three tasks for the Water Quality Team, Silverberg said: first, to consider the intended application of the new data, second, to develop a plan to do a fast-track review of the information that has already been gathered, and third, to develop a revised Lower Snake water temperature monitoring framework. Brown said that, with respect to the second task, since the Water Quality Team membership includes considerable expertise on water temperature issues, he would encourage them to undertake the review of the existing data themselves, rather than seeking funding for an outside contractor.

V. PATH 2000.

Brown said a PATH/IT meeting was held on July 27, to discuss the future of PATH in the context of that piece of a broader institutional structure that we need to develop for the 2000 Biological Opinion. As most of you are aware, he said, NMFS intends to reinitiate consultation

on the FCRPS this fall, and conclude another consultation next spring. Part of that decision is the “dams in/dams out” question, but there are other items that need to be addressed regardless of how the “dams in/dams out” question is answered – operational issues, interim actions, and, finally, the institutional piece. The July 27 PATH/IT meeting was held to discuss the analytical portion of the institutional piece, Brown explained.

We have been talking internally at NMFS about the PATH process, he continued; we have started some additional analyses to look at populations coast-wide that PATH has not yet looked at, because NMFS needs to develop this process not only for Columbia River stocks but for coastal stocks and Puget Sound stocks as well. We need to have some continuity between what we’re doing with these different populations, in terms of how we approach the evaluation of actions under a Section 7 or recovery context. The NMFS Science Center has been staffing up to provide expertise in that area, Brown said, and the question is, how do we mesh that effort with the existing PATH process in the Columbia River? Basically, he said, we want to keep those portions of the PATH process that work well, and fix those portions that we think need fixing.

Brown noted that a copy of the Collaborative Analytical Team memo, “NMFS Proposal for Restructuring PATH and Reviewing Proposed Activities for FY2000,” dated July 26, is attached to the agenda for today’s meeting. This was the focus of the discussion we had in the July 27 IT/PATH meeting, he said. What it says, basically, is that the process we envision would be a lot like PATH, in that it would be collaborative, would include many, if not all, of the same participants, would involve continued BPA funding of the participation of the states, tribes federal agencies and independent scientists. It would also follow the same basic structure of identifying target population levels, doing initial data recognizance, acquisition and interpretation, developing models, conducting analysis, subjecting it to peer review, and designing future research, monitoring and evaluation.

One of the key needs of this process would be the ability to integrate it across populations, Brown said – we need to be consistent with all of the populations we deal with, coast-wide, but also within the Columbia Basin. As we consider experimental management options, for instance, which may effect more than one population, and as we move beyond hydro into hatchery, harvest and habitat issues, those analyses need to be able to deal with data differences, and produce analyses that can be integrated.

There are three basic differences between what NMFS envisions and the current process, Brown continued. First, we recommend the use of a core group that would be very similar to the existing PATH planning group to coordinate the analyses; the big difference is that we envision that group being more like the existing Regional Forum committees, and that it would have a chair from the NMFS Science Center, Brown said. A second difference is that we would empower that group to develop the objectives, and guide the activities, of the groups that are doing the individual population analyses – at present, the PATH planning group tries to do that, but not all of the proposals that come up through that group follow the guidelines the PATH planning group has established. Through the core group, we would hope to have a higher level of control of those things that are a part of this particular collaborative analytical process, Brown explained.

The third difference is the availability of the models and the information, said Brown. PATH has done a good job of making all of the information available within the process, but it has been difficult for those outside the process, including those within NMFS who are not direct

participants in the PATH workshops, to really follow what has gone on. We want to be sure that, in the future, all of the information and all of the models are readily available, and that the results that come out of those models are reproducible.

In terms of where we go from here, said Brown, we would like to engage in a series of discussions to develop a set of guidelines, comparable to the ones we looked at from the Water Quality Team this morning, laying out who this collaborative group is, how they make decisions, how they assign work, report findings and, in general, how they will operate. The TMT guidelines will be used as a template, he said. What the IT/PATH group decided to do, at its July 27 meeting, was to form a small group that could further develop these guidelines, to see whether we can come to agreement on them, Brown said. Probably the most significant issue is the idea that NMFS will take more of a leadership role in this process, eliminating one of the only groups that, from the perspective of at least some of the PATH participants, is a level playing field, Brown said. While I'm sensitive that there may be some issues we're unable to resolve, he said, it seemed like a productive exercise to try to develop these guidelines, identify the areas where we can reach agreement and sharpening those areas where we cannot. The group that will be working on the guidelines includes myself, Tony Nigro, Jim Nielsen, Rob Lothrop and possibly Keith Kutchins, Brown said.

After the morning discussion on July 27, Brown continued, there was a meeting of the CBFWA anadromous fish managers group; during the afternoon session, we discussed how CBFWA will be responding to the ISRP comments – specifically, how CBFWA will be responding to the ISRP's recommendation that PATH funding be zeroed out in 2000. Ultimately, we came to agreement that CBFWA, including NMFS, will support continued funding of the PATH project in 2000, pretty much as proposed, with the qualification that the subgroup I mentioned will, between now and November, attempt to develop these guidelines, Brown said. The guidelines will then be used as the core of a proposal, to be submitted through CBFWA's Annual Implementation Workplan, to be submitted for funding in FY'01. That proposal needs to be completed by early December to be included in the BPA funding cycle; there would be a mechanism by which we would be able to begin implementing the new structure and guidelines through modification of the FY'00 contracts.

Brown distributed Enclosure G, a letter from NMFS to CBFWA, dated August 4, describing NMFS's support for CBFWA's proposed approach to responding to the ISRP's comments. Brown also distributed Enclosure H, the facilitators' notes from the July 27 meeting.

As I mentioned, during the IT/PATH meeting, it was agreed that the work group would develop a set of guidelines comparable to those already in place for the other Regional Forum committees, said Brown; during the afternoon session, that was refined slightly to working on an FY'01 proposal, the guts of which would then be the basis for modifications to the 2000 workplans. My guess, however, is that the guidelines are still going to be the best avenue to get all of that defined, Brown said.

At the July 27 meeting, it was agreed that parties would review the NMFS proposal, and bring any comments they might have to today's meeting, said Silverberg. Several of the participants at the July 27 meeting requested an opportunity to review the NMFS proposal, and, possibly, to table an alternative proposal, said Brown – that was one of the purposes of today's agenda item. I don't know if people are prepared to do that today, he said; NMFS hasn't received any

comments on the proposal to date. Tony Nigro said Oregon intends to provide specific feedback on NMFS' proposal, but is still formulating its specific response.

I did want to share a couple of thoughts, Nigro said. First, NMFS' focus, in its proposal, is on providing support to its decision analysis role. From Oregon's perspective, this collaborative process needs to be designed and implemented not only to inform federal decisions, but to inform state and tribal decisions. This needs to be done in such a way that we're all confident in the analysis and the results of that analysis, given the fact that some of us, at least, still claim that we have statutory responsibility for the fish and wildlife resources in the basin. If we're to invest significant resources in this collaboration, he said, it needs to be done in such a way that we are confident in the analysis and its results, and that those results can be used in our own decisionmaking. The priorities that are set through this collaborative process need to be sensitive to the needs of the states and tribes, as well as to those of the federal management agencies, Nigro said.

Another point that was made at the IT/PATH meeting was that, as we develop a structure in which NMFS would play a more active leadership role, we need to guard against the perception that NMFS is simply trying to modify PATH because it is threatening their view of how the process should be going, Nigro said. The process needs to be set up in such a way that that doesn't even come into question, said Nigro.

Related to that is the fact that we need to encourage the use of independent facilitation in this process, Nigro said, so that we can trust that the process truly is open and balanced, and one participant doesn't have veto power over everyone else.

Finally, said Nigro, one of PATH's strengths is that it has been a very formal and deliberative analytical process and framework in which the various hypotheses put forward by its participants were investigated in a rigorous, scientific context, which included the requirement that the participants exchange information, hypotheses and analyses in written form. The process is extremely transparent, and produces an excellent record of everything that has been discussed and proposed. It also includes adequate lead time, so that the participants have an opportunity to thoughtfully review one another's thoughts and ideas. These are critical elements of the PATH process that Oregon, at least, will be advocating be preserved in the new process, Nigro said.

Oregon does share NMFS' belief that the new process should be more transparent to outside parties, said Nigro, and their belief that there are other improvements that could be made. Jim Nielsen said Washington agrees with many of Oregon's comments; the biggest issue for us, he said, is that some semblance of the level playing field offered by PATH be retained in the new process. Independent facilitation is one way to help achieve that, he said; another key element is independent scientific review. In general, however, Washington agrees that PATH can be improved, and that its scope needs to be expanded.

Jim Weber said CRITFC also endorses many of Oregon and Washington's comments; he distributed Enclosure I, a letter from CRITFC Executive Director Donald Sampson to Will Stelle of NMFS, dated August 5, containing CRITFC's comments on the NMFS proposal. As the letter demonstrates, said Weber, CRITFC is very concerned about this proposal, as it currently stands, and feels that it threatens the scientific integrity and fairness of the PATH process. We also believe that PATH exists to do more than provide information to the federal decision-makers,

Weber said; it exists so that the region and the nation can have some faith that whatever we do for salmon restoration, not just ESA compliance, is based on the best available science. In short, we're taking this proposed change very seriously, and hope that NMFS doesn't regard its proposal as being carved in stone, he said.

The group discussed the integration of the analysis that would come out of the new collaborative process proposed by NMFS with other ongoing analytical processes in the region, such as EDT and the Federal Caucus matrix approach; Newsom observed that the processes need to be complimentary, rather than supplementary – in other words, they need to inform, rather than simply adding contradictory information that serves only to confuse the issue at hand. Our goal is to develop a single process that has multiple levels, Brown replied.

In response to a question from Newsom, Brown said that, while he agrees that the new collaborative process will not be up and running in time to inform the spring 2000 Biological Opinion, the intent is that it will provide a post-2000 collaborative analytical structure to inform decisions – included, but not limited to, NMFS decisions on the effects of actions being reviewed under Section 7, and on the effects of potential recovery measures being considered in recovery plans across all ESUs and all Hs. Newsom suggested that it would also be helpful, in the process of reviewing the NMFS proposal, if the non-federal statutory responsibilities the states and tribes would like this process to inform could be clearly laid out.

Is there a feeling, among this group, that the Implementation Team needs to provide a formal response to the Power Planning Council regarding the ISRP's comments, beyond the letter NMFS has sent to CBFWA? Brown asked. Daley said for the record that BPA cannot participate on this issue or the facilitation issue, to be taken up later in today's agenda. However, he said, I would suggest that it is probably appropriate for CBFWA to respond to the Council regarding the ISRP's comments, but it would likely be inappropriate for the IT to do so. John Palensky observed that the Council is considering a proposal that there be no project solicitation process for FY'01; this being the case, he said, from a procedural standpoint, it may be a good idea for the IT to provide a direct response advocating that the door be left open for the change the ISRP has recommended. Otherwise, he said, we may have a procedural problem, in that we will be unable to submit a proposal for FY'01.

I guess if I were to draft a letter from the IT to the Council, said Brown, it would a lot like the motion we supported in the CBFWA process – basically, that we support continued funding as proposed for FY'00, subject to mid-course correction as developed through this review process, which is designed primarily to produce a 2001 proposal. And the IT is more or less in agreement with the review process proposed by NMFS? Anderson asked. I believe so, Brown replied.

After a few minutes of additional discussion, Brown said it probably makes sense to send a letter from the IT to the Council, expressing the IT's support for continued PATH funding in FY'00, and informing the Council that we will be conducting a review process, the goal of which will be to develop a proposal for FY'01. What we're going to need in the future is a collaborative analytical process that helps us answer questions about the effects of a given action, relative to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and the potential effects of actions that could be included in a recovery plan, Brown said. It was agreed that the draft letter will be circulated for IT review within the next week before it is forwarded to the Council.

After checking with the Council, Ruff said comments on the ISRP review, or anything else the Council is looking at in the project selection arena, need to be submitted by Friday, August 13. With respect to the Council's consideration of alternative ways to look at project selection in the future, Ruff said Council staff is currently refining alternatives for discussion at the Council's August 10-11 meeting in Helena.

VI. CBFWA Response to NWPPC Draft Decision Document.

CBFWA's Tom Iverson explained that CBFWA is in the process of preparing a programmatic response to the ISRP's comments, and to address the key issues that were raised in the July 7 Northwest Power Planning Council issue document. We'll be running those items through each of our caucuses, said Iverson, and will be compiling responses to each of the issues raised in the July 7 memo.

The ISRP raised a total of 14 issues, including mainstem M&E analysis and data management, Iverson continued. The CBFWA response will have three sections: the Smolt Monitoring Program, data management, and PATH. On the Smolt Monitoring Program front, Iverson explained, the ISRP is recommending that a comprehensive review of the SMP be done; our response says basically that we already do an annual review of the Smolt Monitoring Program, so what would be the intent of a comprehensive review? Iverson said. We don't object to a review, said DeHart, but we would like to talk about its purpose.

The next section of the CBFWA response is data management, said Iverson; the ISRP's main concern appears to be duplication of effort. There are several data management efforts supported by the Direct Program, including PIT-tagging, the University of Washington data center, the Fish Passage Center and StreamNet. Our response is that each of these efforts provides data for specific purposes; in the managers' opinion, there isn't much overlap between those efforts. It was observed that the U of W database duplicates much of the Fish Passage Center database; DeHart replied that the Fish Passage Center database is a public resource, available to anyone; if U of W wants to simply copy our information and put it elsewhere, they can do so, she said. Ruff noted that the U of W data center is also BPA direct-funded, which is apparently the issue the ISRP picked up on. Brown asked whether CBFWA's comments will address this specific issue; Iverson replied that he has not yet received any comments from the University of Washington data center, but that he can make some inquiries in an effort to respond to this issue. That would probably be a good idea, said Daley – U of W does do a lot more with that database than simply copying it.

The third section of the CBFWA response has to do with PATH, Iverson said. We received a huge response to the ISRP comments from Dave Marmorek of PATH; essentially, Marmorek notes that, despite the fact that the ISRP is recommending that PATH be "honorably retired," many of the ISRP's recommendations for the future are specifically what PATH is proposing to do in the future.

In response to a question from Ruff, Iverson said CBFWA's response to the ISRP comments will be officially handed to the Council on August 20.

VII. Regional Forum Facilitation.

Palensky distributed Enclosure J, a memo, dated August 2, containing a letter from Brown to

Bob Lohn, Director of Fish and Wildlife at the Council, expressing the unanimous support of the IT membership for the continuation of facilitation services. Palensky noted that the ISRP commented, in its review of the FY'00 proposals, that they do not understand why facilitation services are needed, and that the FY'00 facilitation proposal failed to establish why such services are necessary. Enclosure J also contains the CBFWA response to the specific comments made by the ISRP; Palensky spent a few minutes going through these items.

CBFWA's comments specify that a letter of confirmation of the support of the Regional Forum committees for continued facilitation services will be provided directly to the Council, Palensky explained; such a draft letter included in this package is that response. The letter requests that the Council reject the ISRP's "Do Not Fund" recommendation for facilitation services, Palensky said; it is important to be sure that this is, in fact, the unanimous recommendation of the Implementation Team. After a few minutes of discussion, NMFS, Reclamation, WDFW, the Corps and ODFW approved the letter; Palensky said he will check with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho and Montana to be sure they support it as well. BPA abstained for policy reasons.

VIII. Regional Forum Scope.

Nigro suggested that this issue be deferred until the September IT agenda; there was general agreement that this be done. Between now and the next IT meeting, Brown asked that Oregon and the Corps sit down to discuss how Willamette operations might most appropriately be addressed within the Regional Forum scope; he asked Soscia to consider the same question with respect to Clean Water Act issues, perhaps in consultation with the state water quality agencies; he asked Newsom to do the same with the Upper Snake. Brown further suggested that one-page descriptions of these issues be provided for IT discussion.

We also need to discuss harvest, habitat and hatcheries, as well as Hanford and the estuary, said Brown – any takers? Newsom suggested that the NMFS Science Center would be the most appropriate entity to lead the estuary discussion; Brown agreed that NMFS will take that one. He said he will ask Jim Nielsen, Daley and Peter Paquet of the Council staff to take the lead on the Hanford discussion. Brown added that he will volunteer NMFS to lead the discussion of the non-hydro Hs.

IX. Hydro Work Group Status Report.

Anderson distributed Enclosure M, a table showing the hydro specifications in the seven Framework alternatives, developed by the federal parties and the Framework participants over a series of three meetings. Another Federal/Framework meeting is scheduled for August 11, at which these hydro specifications will be discussed further.

The alternatives that will be reflected in the federal "Four-H" paper, due out at the end of October, correspond to Alternatives 3, 4 and 5 in this list, said Anderson. The basic game plan is to develop a common set of alternatives; we currently have 98% agreement on the specifications of what those alternatives will look like for hydro. There is still some minor tweaking to be done, he said, but this should give you a sense of where we're heading. Anyone who wants to engage in this discussion is encouraged to attend the August 11 meeting, Anderson said.

X. Next IT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, September 2, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NMFS' Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.